

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 AMSTER 00265 231408Z  
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-08 USIA-15 /036 W  
-----232232Z 055710 /73

R 231115Z MAR 77  
FM AMCONSUL AMSTERDAM  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3023  
USDOC WASHDC  
INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS  
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG  
AMCONSUL ANTWERP  
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE  
AMCONSUL ROTTERDAM

UNCLAS AMSTERDAM 265

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: BEXP, BE, LU, NL  
SUBJ: TRADE MISSION: COMPUTER-AIDED BUSINESS SYSTEMS

REF: A) AMSTERDAM 223 (NOTAL) B) BRUSSELS 2152 (NOTAL)  
C) LUXEMBOURG 187 (NOTAL) D) USDOC 3249 AND PREVIOUS

1. THE COMPUTER-AIDED BUSINESS SYSTEMS TRADE MISSION (TM) TO  
THE NETHERLANDS MARCH 7-9 WAS A SUCCESS FOR ITS MEMBERS BUT,  
PARADOXICALLY, WAS OF LOW RELATIVE VALUE TO POST TRADE EFFORTS.

2. MISSION MEMBERS APPARENTLY UNDERESTIMATED THEIR SUCCESS HERE  
(SEE THE MISSION DIRECTOR S REPORT AMSTERDAM 223). A 35 PERCENT  
RANDOM SAMPLING TO DUTCH BUSINESSMEN WHO CONTACTED TM MEMBERS  
GAVE THE FOLLOWING RESULTS:

A) 80 PERCENT OF THESE BUSINESSMEN MET NEW U.S. FIRMS AND FOUND  
THESE CONTACTS 'VERY VALUABLE'.

B) 50 PERCENT PLAN INCREMENTAL PURCHASES FROM THE U.S. AS A  
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PAGE 02 AMSTER 00265 231408Z

RESULT OF MISSION CONTACTS. ONLY 10 PERCENT HAD PREVIOUSLY  
PLANNED ANY PURCHASES FROM THE U.S.

C) NONE MINDED THE MIX OF AMERICANS AND TCN'S IN THE TM.

D) DUTCH CONTACTS ANTICIPATE MAKING PURCHASES FROM MISSION MEM-  
BER FIRMS IN EXCESS OF DOLS 2.5 MILLION DURING THE NEXT YEAR.

E) POSITIVE COMMENTS INCLUDED SEVERAL COMPLIMENTS FOR AN INDIVIDUAL APPOINTMENT FORMAT WHICH CALLED FOR HALF-HOUR INITIAL MEETINGS FOLLOWED BY LATER IN-DEPTH DISCUSSIONS ONLY WHEN DESIRED BY BOTH THE TM MEMBER AND THE DUTCH BUSINESSMAN. THE FIRST EVENING'S RECEPTION AT THE CONSUL GENERAL S RESIDENCE WAS ALSO DESCRIBED AS AN 'IDEAL WAY TO MEET WITH THE MISSION'. CRITICISMS WERE DIRECTED AT THE MISSION'S SMALL SIZE AND LACK OF DEPTH, THE SHORTAGE OF PRE-MISSION LITERATURE AND TOTAL ABSENCE OF FIRMS SEEKING REPRESENTATION. IT SHOULD BE NOTED HOWEVER THAT, DESPITE PRE-MISSION PUBLICITY IN 3 PUBLICATIONS WITH COMBINED CIRCULATION OF 147,000, A DIRECT MAILING OF 800 AND INDIRECT MAILINGS BY 2 TRADE ASSOCIATIONS TO ANOTHER 300 FIRMS, THE MISSION DID NOT ATTRACT MOST KEY END-USERS OR MAJOR FIRMS IN THE FIELD.

COMMENT:

A) THE MISSION WAS A SUCCESS FOR PARTICIPATING FIRMS. HOWEVER, IT WAS TOO SMALL FOR EFFICIENT HANDLING AT POST AS A FORMAL TRADE MISSION. PREPARATIONS REQUIRED ABOUT 30 MAN-DAYS STAFF TIME, EXCLUSIVE OF TEMPORARY SECRETARIAL SERVICES (23 FSL AND 7 FSO). INDIVIDUAL VISITS BY THESE 4 FIRMS COULD HAVE BEEN HANDLED WITH AT MOST ONE THIRD OF THIS EFFORT. MISSION COMPOSITION WAS ALSO LESS THAN OPTIMAL. TWO OF FOUR MEMBERS HAD HAD FULL TIME SALES STAFF IN AMSTERDAM FOR SOME TIME. ANOTHER WAS ALREADY REPRESENTED BY A BELGIAN FIRM. NONE WAS SEEKING REPRESENTATION. ONLY TWO FIRMS SENT REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE U.S. AND OF THESE, ONE PREFERRED A ROLE SUBORDINATE TO ITS LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE. FORCEFUL PROMOTION  
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PAGE 03 AMSTER 00265 231408Z

OF SUCH A MISSION DAMAGES POST CREDIBILITY AND LOWERS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF FUTURE EFFORTS.

B) IN REVIEWING MISSION ADMINISTRATION, WE CONCLUDE THAT COSTS TO THE U.S.G. WERE EXCESSIVE. IN ADDITION TO HEAVY DEMANDS ON POST STAFF TIME, TWO OTHER POINTS STAND OUT: SPECIFICALLY, THE ADVANCED OFFICER'S VISIT WAS UNNECESSARY. WE SUGGEST THAT FUTURE MISSIONS NORMALLY NOT INCLUDE AN ADVANCED VISIT. EVEN IF NECESSARY, AN ADVANCED OFFICER SHOULD COME AT LEAST 4 WEEKS BEFORE A MISSION, AND HAVE IN-DEPTH TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE INDUSTRY INVOLVED. IN THIS INSTANCE, THE POSITION OF MISSION DIRECTOR SHOULD ALSO HAVE BEEN ELIMINATED. PERHAPS ONE IS NEEDED FOR LARGE OR COMPLEX MISSIONS, BUT IN GENERAL, IT IS BELIEVED DIRECT CONTROL BY POST OFFICERS WOULD BE MORE EFFICIENT AND PRODUCTIVE.

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## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009